



**THE POLICE COMMISSIONER**  
**CITY OF NEW YORK**

October 6, 2008

Ms. Faiza Ali  
475 Riverside Drive, Room 246  
New York, NY 10115

Dear Ms. Ali,

This communication is prompted by the discussions I have had with you and others since the release of the NYPD's report, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, in August of 2007. As you know, these sessions have provided us with the opportunity to review the report's findings, listen to your concerns and comments and to consider recommendations. Over the course of more than seven hours of frank discussions, we have gained a greater understanding of the issues discussed, perceptions created and language used in the report that caused some concern.

First, and in response to these concerns, are the following observations and clarifications:

- Although the report never suggested or eluded to the perception "that a majority (or at least a substantial plurality) of Muslims in the United States present a threat to public order," the readership would have been better served if a statement clearly asserting that Muslims are not in any way a threat to security were to have been included at the beginning of the report.
- NYPD's concerns about the proliferation of violent ideology in the West and the potential for its contribution to the radicalization of vulnerable youth in New York City--especially among young Muslims due to the extremist's misuse of Islam as a basis of this ideology-- were not meant as indictments, but rather an issue that both the community and police must confront together.
- The report was never intended to be policy prescriptive for law enforcement actions, a fact that should have been emphasized, as you so noted during our discussions. Indeed, the very reason this report was disseminated publically--and not just within the law enforcement community--was for the expressed purpose of engaging and soliciting a broad array of views from a diverse group of people.

- The report does not profile individuals on the basis of religion or ethnicity, but rather focuses on a broader range of commonalities that cut across all of the report's eleven case studies. In light of your comments, this particular distinction in regards to both religion and ethnicity should have been singled out and more clearly delineated.
- The report did reveal commonalities across all 11 case studies. Some of these commonalities included behaviors associated with religion. This is not to say that these particular behaviors are indicators of terrorism, but rather that they were endemic across all 11 cases. In fact, what the case studies reveal is that it is not about specific behaviors, but about sets of behaviors taken in context.
- Regarding the question of whether 11 case studies provide a sound statistical basis to support the report's findings, it is not and your point is well taken. That said, the eleven case studies of this report were a subset of a broader examination of other terrorism-related plots and events—a point that should have been made more explicably in the report.

Second, I would like to highlight a few of the things we have done in response to many of the recommendations and suggestions raised during the last three meetings.

- ***Muslim Community Participation.*** In January 2008, the NYPD hosted a Radicalization and De-radicalization Workshop attended by over 60 senior members of Western European, Canadian, Australian, and U.S. law enforcement and intelligence services. Two of your members, M. Ali Chaudry from the Center for Understanding Islam and Sheikh Moussa Drammeh from the Islamic Leadership School, delivered presentations and fielded questions from the assembled participants.
- ***Seeking Views and Expertise from Muslim Experts.*** In order to deepen its understanding of Islam, Islamic terminology, extremism, radicalization, and terrorism, in February 2008, the NYPD dispatched a four-person team to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The NYPD team held substantive discussions with radicalization and terrorism experts in the Saudi Ministry as well as with religious Islamic scholars and clerics to include the Grand Mufti, Abdul-Azeez ibn Abdullah Aal ash-Shaykh.
- ***Bringing In Outside Expertise.*** As per suggestions and because a good part of our report discussed human behaviors relative to the radicalization process, the NYPD retained Dr. Marc Sageman, M.D., PhD, a forensic psychiatrist, behaviorist, and terrorism author to be its first Scholar-in-Residence. As author of *Understanding Terror Networks* and more recently, *Leaderless Jihad*, Dr. Sageman is considered a global expert on the radicalization phenomenon and has consulted with various branches of the U.S. Government and foreign governments, to include Saudi Arabia.

Lastly, I look forward to maintaining an open dialogue with you and others as we continue pursuing our understanding of the radicalization phenomenon and seeking strategies for mitigating its effects on our City's populations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R Kelly', is written over the printed name and title. The signature is stylized with a large initial 'R' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Raymond W. Kelly  
Police Commissioner